

Occasional Papers
on The History of
Boston College

THE COLLEGE AND THE CITY

A History of the Boston College Club



Thomas H. O'Connor, Ph.D.
University Historian
March 2003

BOSTON COLLEGE CLUB



Dear Member:

I have been pleased and privileged to chair the committee responsible for the research and publication of the history of the Boston College Club, a copy of which you will receive this evening. As Chairman, I offer sincere thanks to all who contributed to this important effort. The founding of our downtown club is the fruit of the Jesuit tradition, a tradition that serves the diversity of urban culture, its successes and failures.

Rev. William P. Leahy, SJ, encouraged this historical account and provided his personal insights and access to university personnel and files. Rev. J. Donald Monan, SJ, lent his philosopher's perspective to the story of the risk and adventure of the club's founding. Professor Tom O'Connor, the University Historian and renowned authority on Boston's history, gave his scholarly and literary gifts to make this publication a reality and a revelation of how the ideals of our university's earliest visionaries provided the foundation upon which the club was built and the cornerstone of its mission.

The members of the Historical Commission, whose names are listed on the final page of this publication, also wish to thank the hundreds of alumni and friends who generously contributed their time and their memories during hundreds of hours of personal interviews for this endeavor. Finally, a particular word of gratitude goes to Jack Joyce ('61), Owen Lynch ('56), and Jack MacKinnon ('62) who, as always, were most generous with their time and assistance, serving as first-hand witnesses for the accuracy of this historical account.

I pray this history will serve as a testament to all that is good in our city, and a reminder of the personal sacrifices made by so many to create in Boston a collegial setting in which club members, Boston College graduates and non-graduates alike, may share and continue the precious legacy of Ever to Excel.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul J. McNamara".

Paul J. McNamara

Chairman ('62, L '65)

Founded in 1998

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BOSTON COLLEGE CLUB



FOREWORD

There is a story that Winston Churchill, at a university commencement, repeated this line three times:

"NEVER GIVE UP"

The existence of The Boston College Club is a tribute to that indefatigable spirit. University Historian, Thomas H. O'Connor, aided by the Club History Committee, chaired by Paul McNamara, has produced a paper highlighting the road traveled by many to reach the current Club.

The roots of the Club go back to 1967. There was a Founders Dinner to celebrate the founding of the Club, but the effort failed after only six months.

There were other false starts at the old Warmuth's and Dini's Restaurants, but we learned something. We learned we needed professional help.

The current Club opened on February 7, 1998. There was a gala celebration, and there will be another gala celebration of our success on our Fifth Anniversary.

We have a current membership of around 2,450, with a waiting list close to 100. The success of the Club is due to the massive efforts of volunteers and club professionals. Jack Joyce, Owen Lynch and Jack MacKinnon had a special role in the success of the Club and spent many hours in the effort.

A wonderful management team, a great chef and a superb support staff have made the difference between success and failure.

This paper honors those who tried so hard and so long to achieve today's Boston College Club.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads 'John J. Curtin, Jr.'.

John J. Curtin, Jr.

Chairman

Board of Governors

THE COLLEGE AND THE CITY

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Rev. John McElroy (1782-1877), founder of Boston College, purchased the land in the newly developed South End of Boston for the creation of what Bishop John Bernard Fitzpatrick of Boston envisioned as his "college in the city."

The College and The City

Many twentieth-century visitors often wonder why Boston College is called “Boston College” when it is not actually located in the city of Boston. A brief look back at the early history of the college may help explain this apparent misnomer, and shed some light on the long and intimate relationship between the college and the city for which it is named.

It all began back in the 1840s with Bishop John Bernard Fitzpatrick, third bishop of Boston, who felt the need for a “college in the city” to which poor immigrant families could send their sons. Just as his predecessor, Bishop Benedict Fenwick, had his dream of Holy Cross as an idyllic, residential institution, located in rural Worcester, Fitzpatrick had his own vision of a more modest urban day college, located in the heart of the city, where young Irish lads could be trained for the service of the church and the benefit of society. This was a concept that the bishop discussed with Rev. John McElroy, SJ as early as 1847, after the Jesuit arrived in Boston to administer the strife-torn St. Mary’s Church in the North End.¹

An immigrant from Ireland who had worked as a missionary, a preacher, and a retreat-master, before serving in the Mexican War as the nation’s first Catholic military chaplain, Fr. McElroy, now 65 years old, responded immediately to the Bishop’s idea and began to put whatever money he could raise aside for the construction of such a college, and was always on the lookout for an available piece of real estate in the city. This was “only the beginning,” Bishop Fitzpatrick assured the Jesuit provincial, as Fr. McElroy set about his task. “Our ultimate aim is to have a College in the City,” he wrote, but explained that since the plan was so ambitious and his diocese so “limited in our resources,” he would have to begin modestly, making “small beginnings,” and placing his trust in God.²

In looking for an appropriate home for the new college, Fr. McElroy was undoubtedly influenced by the philosophy St. Ignatius urged upon his band of followers of seeking out a convenient location in a large urban center - the “*commodo luogo*” - where their universities would exert “the moral power of education for the good of the city and for its reform.” Convinced that the city was

usually a cultural and intellectual center with many resources available to all people, Ignatius conveyed the ideals of an urban ministry that would serve all classes of people, from the scions of the royal families to the poor people who could not afford the costs of private instruction.³ While serving as pastor of St. Mary's Church, therefore, Fr. McElroy continued to keep his eyes open for a piece of property in Boston suitable for the construction of a church and a college.

Late in 1850 he purchased some of the Leverett Street property near Causeway Street where the old jail had been torn down to make way for the new Charles Street prison. Once word got out that the so-called Jail Lands had been purchased by Catholics, however, nativists pressured city authorities to restore the old zoning restrictions that limited construction on the property to "dwellings or stores." With the local Know-Nothing movement rampant during the mid-1850s, the bishop decided to sell off the Jail Lands and seek a less controversial site for his college in the emerging South End of the city.⁴

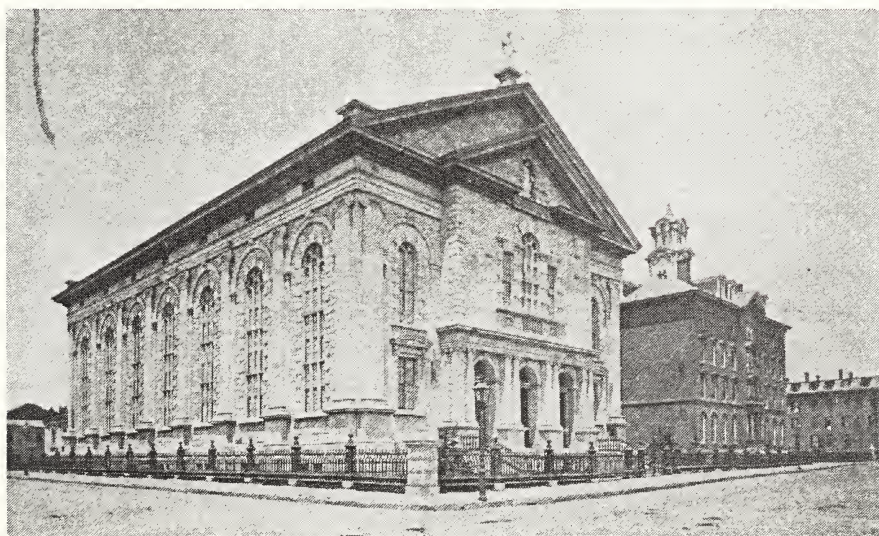
The area commonly referred to as the South End had been created by the gradual process of landfill that widened the slender corridor of land that connected downtown Boston with the mainland, thereby providing more living space for the city. By the mid-1850s the South End, with its broad thoroughfares, grassy parks, tree-lined squares, and handsome rows of bow-front houses was prime residential property. Agreeing with most Bostonians that this new development was surely the area into which the city's well-to-do population would eventually gravitate when forced to abandon the older parts of town because of the "encroachments of trade and commerce," Bishop Fitzpatrick decided that the South End would be an ideal location for his college. Not only would it be convenient to young Catholic boys in the city itself, thanks to a new horse-car line that operated from Scollay Square to Roxbury by way of the South End, but it would also be available to neighborhoods like South Boston, Roxbury, and other "adjoining towns" where immigrant families were beginning to move.⁵

With his customary energy and enthusiasm (he was always making his Jesuit superiors nervous), Fr. McElroy made an offer for an attractive piece of property on Harrison Avenue, between Concord and Newton Streets, in the South End. Although he once again encountered incessant delays and postponements, on July 22, 1857, the Land Committee of the city of Boston finally agreed to sell him the tract of land for fifty cents a foot - twenty-five cents less than the current property rates - since the land was to be "church property." On April 7, 1858, Bishop Fitzpatrick turned the first spadeful of dirt at the groundbreaking ceremonies for the Jesuits' new church of the Immaculate Conception, out of which would eventually come his cherished "college in the city."⁶

It took two more years for the college buildings to be completed, but because of the outbreak of the Civil War, as well as the shortage of Jesuit teachers, it was decided to use the buildings temporarily as a seminary, and later as a high school for young boys. On Monday morning, September 5, 1864, however, Boston

College officially opened its doors, and although the first class of only 22 students did not seem very promising (“Many came gratuitously,” wrote Rev. Robert Fulton, SJ, rather dourly in his diary, “and only one had talent.”), the numbers grew steadily as the new college, in its own building, started out on its half-century at the Harrison Street location.⁷ By the end of the first year, Fr. Fulton was able to record an enrollment of 48 students, and each year thereafter the numbers grew slowly but impressively — rising to 81 students in 1866, to 114 in 1868, and to a total of 140 from various parts of the city in 1870. By that time, the school had settled into a smooth and efficient Jesuit routine, with special church collections, personal contributions, and local fairs supplementing the meager income from tuitions. In addition to their regular program of academic studies, school authorities made efforts to expand the benefits of the college to the general community. A library of 1,000 books was established in the basement of the adjoining Immaculate Conception Church, and the same room was used as a club for the young Catholic men of the city, preparing the way for the founding in 1875 by Fr. Fulton of the Young Men’s Catholic Association.⁸

But the days of the South End were numbered. The early prospects of the South End as the city’s most fashionable residential area quickly soured as another group of developers filled in the north side of Boston Neck and proceeded to lay out what became known as the Back Bay. The wide streets, the elegant extension of Commonwealth Avenue so reminiscent of the Champs Elysees, and the rows of impressive residences in the Second French Empire style, quickly eclipsed the South End as Boston’s most desirable address. By the 1880s and



The original arrangement of the buildings in the South End, photographed about 1875, with the Boston College buildings standing to the right of the Immaculate Conception Church.

1890s, while the Back Bay was flourishing, the South End was becoming a run-down and often neglected neighborhood. Its once-handsome bow-front brick mansions were being converted into inexpensive boarding houses, and its tree-lined streets were lined with small shops and dingy saloons. The stately Cathedral of the Holy Cross that Archbishop John Williams had completed in 1875 was all but obscured by the dark, rusting skeleton of the elevated railway that ran along Washington Street with a deafening clatter that drowned out sermons and interrupted devotions. Clearly many Catholic leaders began to feel that it was time to move to better quarters. As an indication of things to come, in 1880, when Archbishop Williams decided to construct St. John's Seminary, he chose to locate it on property he purchased in the rural suburb of Brighton. Not long after he succeeded Williams in 1909, Archbishop William O'Connell moved his chancery office from the South End to Granby Street in the Back Bay, before eventually moving near the seminary in the hills of Brighton.⁹

Boston College, too, felt the need for more space, more room, and a less depressing location than the congested streets of the South End. Although the student enrollment was holding up, and there was still space available in the two buildings themselves, there was no adequate recreational space in the immediate area. In the 1890s, Rev. Timothy Brosnahan, SJ, purchased 400,000 square feet of land about a mile away, on Massachusetts Avenue near the Dorchester line, but it proved to be not at all suitable for the school's recreational needs. In addition, there was growing pressure to separate the older boys in the college program from the younger boys ("the boys in knickerbockers") enrolled in the high school.¹⁰ Some indication of the current thinking can be inferred from the fact that in 1900 the realty firm of Meredith and Grew recommended to the Boston College president, Rev. W. G. Read Mullan, SJ, three parcels of land for his consideration - all of which were in the Brighton-Chestnut Hill area: one was in the area now occupied by St. Elizabeth's Hospital; the second was later occupied by Mount Alvernia Academy; the third was the Chestnut Hill site presently occupied by Boston College.¹¹

In 1907, Rev. Thomas Gasson, SJ, who had served as a professor of philosophy at Boston College for the preceding twelve years, became president, and at once pressed with great zeal for a new site and what university historian, Rev. Charles F. Donovan, SJ, called "a new vision of academic prestige" for the college. The Chestnut Hill property was purchased that year, and the construction of Gasson Hall went on from 1909 to 1913. Leaving the high school behind in the South End, on Friday morning, March 28, 1913, a group of young men wearing derby hats and carrying "Boston bags" boarded the streetcars for the long trip to Lake Street. Arriving at the end of the line, they trudged up the hill along Commonwealth Avenue to the new campus, where they participated in the dedication of the Tower building. Six months later, on September 17, 1913, the first collegiate academic year began, with a record enrollment of almost 400 freshmen.¹² Interestingly enough, Boston College was not the only Jesuit college in the United States to move from its original site at the turn of the century.



Members of the class of 1913, "Boston bags" in hand, arriving from the South End on March 28, 1913, for the formal dedication of the Tower Building on the Heights at Chestnut Hill.

A variety of reasons, according to Rev. Thomas M. Lukas, SJ, including a greater interest in sports as well as the advent of easy transportation, led many Jesuit colleges to relocate to larger campuses "outside the urban core." More often than not, he added, "the high school kept the older downtown campus."¹³

Although the new Boston College campus was now located well beyond the boundaries of the city of Boston, there still remained many connections between the college and the city. Father Gasson himself did not want to cut off all ties with the city, and wished to maintain the idea of the city as an intellectual center where the Jesuit mission could flourish. He was quoted in one local newspaper as calling for the formation of a "Boston College Club," with membership open to those "interested in the extension of Boston College."¹⁴ Despite its move to Chestnut Hill, Boston College continued to conduct many programs and activities in the city, and only a short time later showed an interest in creating an adult education program - "a night school of graduate caliber." The Boston College Evening School offered a series of lectures for credit, and soon developed into a full program with the assistance of Fr. Fulton's "Young Men's Catholic Association" which was now a "lively force in the Catholic life of Boston."¹⁵

In 1919, Boston College began awarding master's degrees in Boston to help alleviate the city's shortage of male teachers after World War I. The new program immediately attracted religious teachers and sisters of the archdiocese, for whom Saturday classes were organized in the Cathedral hall as well as other downtown locations. By 1923, Cardinal O'Connell gave permission for lay women to attend lectures in the evening school of the Young Men's Catholic Association, held on the site of the old college on James Street, and to receive credit toward degrees by the Boston College School of Education. In 1929, a Boston College Law School was established, and over the years had several locations in the city, first in the Lawyers' Building at 11 Beacon Street, later in the New England Power Building on Stuart Street, and then in the Kimball Building on Tremont Street. A large building at 126 Newbury Street in the Back Bay section of Boston housed the Intown School, the Nursing School, and the Graduate School of Social Work.



The Tower Building – originally called the Recitation Building – was the first building constructed on the new Chestnut Hill campus in Newton. It stood alone on the Heights until 1917, when St. Mary’s Hall was ready for occupancy by the members of the Jesuit faculty.

Gradually, however, these academic ties with the city gave way as, one by one, the various schools left the downtown area and moved out to the Chestnut Hill campus. In 1954, the Law School moved to the Heights, where it remained until 1975 when it moved to its present location on the former Newton College campus; that same year, a separate coeducational School of Education was established at Chestnut Hill. In 1960, Cushing Hall was constructed for the Boston College School of Nursing, and by that time both the Evening College and the School of Social Work had left Newbury Street for Linden Lane.

As Boston College grew in both size and reputation, the addition of a graduate school, a law school, and several other professional schools raised the question of whether or not the name of the institution should be changed to reflect its new and obvious university status. The growth of the institution, the increasing confusion with nearby Boston University, the European meaning of the term college as a secondary school, and other considerations, were matters of serious concern. The subject was first broached at a meeting of the Board of Trustees in 1953, when the motion was made to change the name to “Boston Catholic University,” while keeping the name of Boston College for the College of Arts and Sciences. The subject came up again at a board meeting in 1956, but was postponed to a future meeting. In 1958, in anticipation of BC’s hundredth anniversary in 1963, the president, Rev. Michael P. Walsh, SJ, appointed a Change-of-Name Committee to resolve the issue. Although the committee made

several recommendations to the president, the failure of the members to arrive at a consensus, combined with growing opposition on the part of the alumni to any name change, persuaded Fr. Walsh to take no action on the committee's report. Because of its close identification with Boston, and the fact that by this time Boston College had established a national reputation in its own right, the question of a name change, as Fr. Donovan put it, was not revived "for serious discussion or resolution."¹⁶

Evidence that Boston College had not forgotten its traditional ties with the city or its concern with urban problems was amply demonstrated during the 1950s and '60s when Mayor John B. Hynes was trying to bring together the political and financial community in order to create a "New Boston." With the approval of Rev. Joseph R. N. Maxwell, SJ, president of Boston College, Rev. W. Seavey Joyce, SJ, then dean of the College of Business Administration, brought together leaders of business and labor, politics and education, to attend the first meeting of what became known as the Citizen Seminars.¹⁷ Held on the Chestnut Hill campus on October 26, 1954, these seminars began a critical series of discussions about how to rescue an old and decrepit city from the doldrums, and lead it into a stable and prosperous future. Over the next twenty-five years, from 1954 to 1979, Boston College was a leading force in opening its campus and providing a public forum to citizens from all stations of life and from every political persuasion, to consider the pressing questions facing the Greater Boston community. After discussing such bread-and-butter issues as jobs, taxes, housing, and transportation, as well as such larger subjects as architecture, design, education, and culture, the seminars were followed by dinners where political and business leaders could continue their discussions in an informal setting. Under the direction of John Galvin, the seminars continued to meet regularly for the next quarter of a century, and were regarded by such authorities as Mayor John F. Collins and Edward J. Logue as indispensable to the urban development of Boston at a critical point in the city's history.¹⁸

The involvement of Boston College in the affairs of the city continued long after the various urban renewal projects had run their course. The Citizen Seminars took on a new viability, becoming more inclusive, expanding the invitation list, involving members of neighborhood organizations, and encouraging greater audience participation. Increasingly the seminars dealt with such issues as poverty, low-income housing, traffic congestion, and inadequate school performance. Rev. J. Donald Monan, SJ, who succeeded Fr. Joyce as president of Boston College in 1972, became a reflective and influential force in almost all aspects of the Boston community. As he established fiscal solvency on the Heights, expanded the physical plant, and led the University to new levels of academic excellence, he also saw it as a responsibility to maintain ties between the college and the city. In 1976, only four years into his presidency, Fr. Monan became a member of the Board of the First National Bank of Boston, and of the Bank of Boston Corporation, a position he held for twenty years. In the midst of the busing crisis, Fr. Monan was chosen by his peers to serve as the first chair-



Civic leaders at a Citizen Seminar at Boston College. From left to right: Governor Christian Herter; Rev. W. Seavey Joyce, SJ, dean of the BC School of Business Administration; Mayor John B. Hynes; Edward J. Logue of New Haven.

man of the seventeen university presidents who agreed to pair with the city's public schools to improve the quality of education. He was appointed one of the charter trustees and later, Overseer, of the Boston Plan for Excellence, that provided millions of dollars for the city's public schools. He also served for ten years as chairman of One-to-One, the Massachusetts Mentoring Partnership and, at the request of the Governor, co-chaired with Bill Cosby the Massachusetts Summit to provide five basic resources to the Commonwealth's children. Though reticent about his personal involvement, he is credited with having had an important role in the creation of the new Fleet Center to replace the old Boston Garden, and in agreements to keep the New England Patriots in Massachusetts. Before the conclusion of his presidency, Boston College had established the CEO Club of Boston, that brings the nation's most distinguished business executives to speak to the city's business leaders, while at the same time establishing a Neighborhood Center in Brighton to coordinate many of BC's university-sponsored volunteer programs.¹⁹

As Boston College continued to grow in numbers and in size during the 1960s and '70s, and as alumni became more prominent in the professional life of the New Boston, they gave serious thought about establishing a central location in the downtown area where they could focus their social and business relationships. This was not the first time such an enterprise was considered, however.



During his years as President of Boston College, Rev. J. Donald Monan, SJ, was an enthusiastic supporter of the idea of a Boston College Club, and became well known for his many contributions to the welfare of the city. Here Fr. Monan (right) meets with former senate president William M. Bulger ('58, L '61) and members of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Massachusetts.

Back in the summer of 1966, on a rainy afternoon in their summer cottage in Woods Hole, Jack Joyce, ('61), Tom Hynes, ('61), and a dozen-or-so young BC graduates talked about the idea of a Boston College club somewhere in downtown Boston. They agreed to meet in Boston in a more business-like setting, discuss the matter further, and bring in some more graduates. The group met regularly in the offices of Tom Ryan, vice-president of the Boston Stock Exchange, comparing views about where such a club would be located and how it would be financed.²⁰ At first, they focused on a location at 43 Hawkins Street called the Wayfarer's Lodge, formerly the site of the Boston Press Club, not far from present-day Government Center. At the time, it was a BRA parcel of land, during the period when Msgr. Francis Lally was chairman of the BRA Board. The BC group did not have sufficient funds to purchase and develop the entire building, but secured a guarantee that their club would occupy the top floor. The BC graduates went ahead with their plans, and a photograph in the April 1967 issue of the *Boston Globe* shows Jack Joyce with Mayor Kevin White, signing a charter of incorporation for the establishment of a non-profit corporation called the Boston College Club.²¹

Jack Joyce, Tom Hynes, and a nucleus of fourteen fellow graduates then arranged for a Founders Dinner at the Sheraton Hotel on the evening of Wednesday, April 12, 1967, to officially launch the Boston College Downtown



Looking at a model of their future BC Downtown Club at a Sheraton Plaza Dinner in April 1967. Left to right: Thomas J. Hynes, Jr., vice-president; John Connors, publicity; John E. Joyce, president; Thomas Ryan, first vice-president; Frederic Haynes, treasurer; and Andrew Aloisi, secretary.

Club. The response was enthusiastic; hundreds of BC alumni pledged \$400,000 in memberships, and the club's president, Jack Joyce announced that he had already received over 300 life memberships and more than 600 regular memberships. Thomas F. Ryan, Jr. ('63) and Thomas J. Hynes, Jr. were vice-presidents; Frederick Haynes ('61) became treasurer; Andrew Aloisi ('61) was secretary, and Jack Connors ('63) handled publicity. John Driscoll ('49), chairman of the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, served as toastmaster of the evening. Former BC president, Rev. Michael P. Walsh, SJ, hailed the club's success as "a milestone in the history of Boston College," and Rev. W. Seavey Joyce, SJ, who had succeeded Fr. Walsh, delivered what Andy Aloisi described as a "rousing speech," and applauded the enterprise as "a move of the university back to the city, combining the old and the new."²²

In spite of enthusiastic support and good intentions, however, the original club failed after a short tenure of six months. For one thing, the subsequent purchaser of the Hawkins Street property wanted the entire building for his own purposes, and subsequently bought off the BC group for the sum of \$10,000. For another, the changes being brought about by urban renewal projects in the areas of Scollay Square and Bowdoin Square created a feeling of instability. As discussions about the Hawkins Street location continued, another possibility came up. Jack Joyce recalled getting a telephone call from Tom Hynes, asking to meet him downtown at the bar at Warmuth's, a popular eating place in the downtown retail district that Paul McNamara ('62) insisted turned out "the best prune

muffins in the world.”²³ Once inside, Hynes told Joyce that the restaurant was scheduled to close in order to make way for a new high-rise office building for Blue Cross Blue Shield. As a result, the facility was available, “lock, stock, and barrel,” on an interim basis, pending future construction of the office building. “How would you like this to be the BC Club?” Hynes asked Joyce, and on the basis of a short-term lease, said Hynes, “Warmuth’s allowed us to deliver on our commitment to come up with a Boston College Downtown Club.” After getting the necessary liquor license from City Hall, where Albert “Dapper” O’Neill was chairman of the Alcoholics Beverages Commission, signing a management contract, and setting the dues at \$100 a year, in October 1969, the BC supporters had a gala, opening-night, black-tie party at Warmuth’s Restaurant, and started out enthusiastically to establish their place in the city.²⁴

Unfortunately, however, the momentum did not last long. Not only was the market not ready, but none of the board members had any professional experience with running the complex operations of a restaurant or a club. “We knew absolutely nothing about it,” admitted John J. Curtin (‘54-L57), who considered this an important teaching experience for any future ventures of this sort. For the moment, however, it was a disaster. The size of the facility, the age of the equipment, and the cost of steam necessary to generate heat that had to be purchased from Edison, put the costs of operation beyond the limited resources of the group, according to Jim Derba (‘51), who was closely involved with the economics of the club.²⁵ The whole project had gotten “out of control,” agreed Andy Aloisi, with the result that the club was “losing money at a terrific rate.” It lasted about six months, and then it was all over. John Wissler (‘57), director of Alumni Relations at that time, remembers getting a call from Jack Joyce telling him that the downtown club had shut down. “Just like that,” exclaimed Wissler, “it was over. Practically overnight it had just shut down.”²⁶ A “life membership,” as one member wisecracked later, “had lasted only about six months.”

For a while, there was no more discussion about a Boston College Club. The late 1960s and early 1970s were years of trouble for Boston College, as with so many colleges and universities at that time. The College was preoccupied with student unrest, a student strike over tuition, demands for curriculum changes, and reactions against the Vietnam War — all coinciding with a serious cash-flow problem, a dwindling endowment, and a growing financial crisis. These were times when there was little time or interest in risky financial ventures off campus.

By the 1980s, however, the new president, Rev. J. Donald Monan, SJ, had substantially changed the College’s prospects. He had succeeded in establishing the fiscal solvency of the university, established improved relations with the alumni, and began increasing the size of the endowment. Student unrest had died down, the Vietnam War came to a close, and Boston College was gaining a new reputation as a leading national Catholic university. Clearly there was a much more positive atmosphere and enthusiastic spirit among BC alumni, some of whom then began to see the advantages of once again trying to establish a downtown club. To this end, they began to investigate, among themselves, possible

locations for an appropriate site in the city.

One of the earliest locations discussed was a relocation of the popular Dini's Restaurant, which was closing its facility on Tremont Street. The daughter of the original owner was apparently planning a reorganization of the building and relocation to another site, with the possibility of Boston College sharing a part of the facility. While there was some initial discussion, the restaurant did not relocate its business and, according to John Wissler, the project slowly "faded away and died."²⁷ When the Women's City Club, a longtime resident on Beacon Street, also ceased operations, John Harrington ('57) and eventually various officials from Boston College visited the premises and inspected the facilities as the possible site for a downtown club. In the long run, however, as BC treasurer Peter McKenzie ('75) expressed it, "the proposal appeared to be losing steam." Convenient parking was not available, the building needed considerable renovation and repair, and the women were not interested in relinquishing title to the facility, causing Boston College to withdraw from consideration.²⁸

It was at this time, early in the 1990s, that Jack Joyce received a call from Mary Lynn Kiley at BankBoston that the Federal Club, a non-profit club located on the top floor of the BankBoston building at 100 Federal Street, was going to close. Created in 1972, the Federal Club had shared kitchen facilities with the Bank itself on the 36th floor of the building, but because of declining membership and diminishing income, had decided to close by the year 1993. The 36th floor would be renovated after removing the asbestos and installing a sprinkler system to comply with city regulations. The news about the Federal Club got around fast (John Wissler remembers hearing about it at Joe Cotter's retirement party), and when Paul McNamara learned about it, he contacted Jack MacKinnon ('62), president of the BC Alumni Association, and they both went to see Jack Joyce, who had been a prime mover in the earlier attempts to create a downtown club.²⁹ After talking with BC alumni Owen Lynch ('56) about prospects for a new downtown club, they opened up conversations with members of BankBoston about taking over the facilities of the Federal Club. Recalling their lack of restaurant experience with the earlier Warmuth's enterprise, the BC group agreed that an established professional organization was absolutely essential. Three alumni – Jack Joyce (organization), Jack MacKinnon (accounting), and Owen Lynch (law) – worked with the Bank to start the legal negotiations and follow through until the facility opened. Through the suggestion of Bob Champion of BankBoston, they consulted with representatives of ClubCorporation of America (ClubCorp). An international company founded in 1957, ClubCorps owns or operates nearly 200 golf courses, country clubs, private business and sports clubs, and resorts.³⁰

In the meantime, Fr. Monan, who had been supportive of the concept of a Boston College downtown club through these early explorations, was kept informed of the ongoing discussions with BankBoston. He recognized the advantages a well-run club in the city would provide to graduates of the College and to the College's presence in the city, and was therefore willing to dedicate financial



The Boston College Club, on the 36th floor of the FleetBoston building at 100 Federal Street in downtown Boston, provides elegant surroundings where members of the club and their guests can enjoy a comfortable mix of business and pleasure as they look out at breathtaking vistas of the city.

resources to assure its viability. In light of the earlier experiences of the 1960s, however, he desired that the organizational structure of the partnership ultimately be responsible for the club, and especially the Alumni Association's role in that partnership, be clear, and that the financial prospects for the club be sound. In response to these concerns, during the summer of 1995, Professor Martin Roth of the College of Business Administration conducted a feasibility study of the project that was delivered to the Alumni Association in December. The report was generally favorable, pointing out that some 18,000 BC alumni were located in the general vicinity of downtown Boston, and could provide an initial potential of 1,000 members that would make the proposed club economically feasible. On December 8, Fr. Monan met with Jack Joyce, Jack MacKinnon, Owen Lynch, Professor Roth, and Peter McKenzie in order to review the results of the study which all agreed realistically supported the financial feasibility of the club. Emphasizing the importance of cost as well as location, the study suggested having several categories of membership and also recommended allowing non-BC alumni to become members.³¹

All the while, discussions had been going on among individual BC alumni members Jack Joyce, Jack MacKinnon, and Owen Lynch; representatives of ClubCorps; and officers of BankBoston. ClubCorp showed a decided interest in working with a major university in the Boston area, but was also acutely conscious of the risks involved at a time when a number of similar clubs were declining in membership and losing money. ClubCorp insisted that the BC Alumni



The Board of Governors: Back Row (L-R): Greg Barber, Giles Mosher; Peter McKenzie; Peter Cronan, Lou Sorgi, Bob Champion, Michael Daley, Peter Manning, John Neuhauser, Dan Foley, Robert Murray. Owen Lynch, Rev. William Neenan, SJ, Carolyn Ellis. Front Row: (R-L): Megan Carroll Shea, John Curtin, Patrick Carney, Jack Joyce, Jack MacKinnon.

Not pictured: Geoffrey Boisi, Jack Connors, Helen Drinan, Sam Gerson, John Harrington, Peter Lynch, Jim Marcellino, Tom O'Neill, Paula Polito; Richard Remis, Tom Ryan, Aviam Soifer, Tom Vanderslice.

Association guarantee a certain number of memberships before it would agree to take over the project. It further urged that the “real movers and shakers” be appointed to the eventual Board of Governors in order to ensure the success of the club.³² At the same time, BankBoston also made its interests known to the BC representatives, strongly urging that the name “The Eagle Club” be used, not only because it would signify Boston College but also because the eagle was the logo of BankBoston. Peter Manning ('60) of BankBoston later offered the personal observation that Fr. Monan's position as a senior director of BankBoston and a highly respected figure in the Boston financial community, had a subtle but significant influence in favor of Boston College during ongoing negotiations with the Bank.³³

As discussions concerning the new downtown club began to reach a decisive stage, however, appropriate organizational structure for the establishment and conduct of such a club still remained unclear. On the one hand, the individual members of the alumni who had provided much of the impetus for planning the club were holding productive discussions with both the Bank and ClubCorp in order to develop a contract for the signatures of members of the partnership. On the other hand, a subcommittee established by the Alumni Board to study the feasibility of the club, had serious reservations about such a venture and voted against supporting the undertaking. The professional staff of the Alumni



Rev. William P. Leahy, SJ, President of Boston College, attending the gala opening of the Boston College Club at a reception in the lobby of the BankBoston Building on February 7, 1998. (L-R): Jack and Nancy Joyce; Fr. Leahy; Jack and Rosemary MacKinnon.

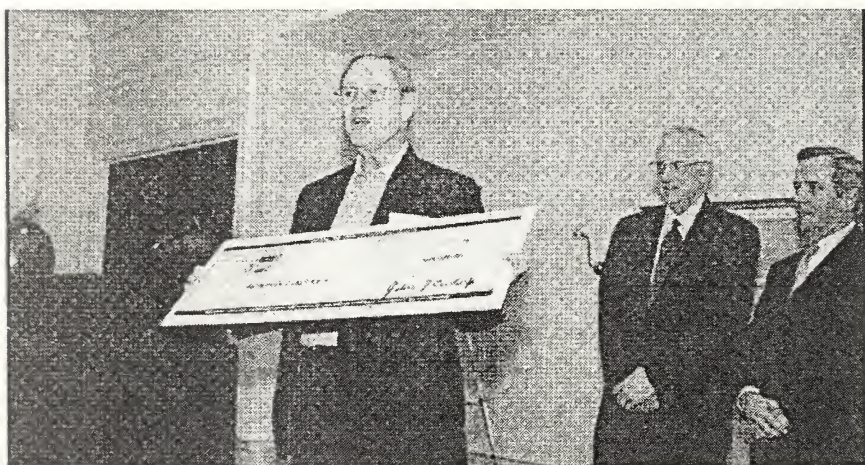
Association, too, continued to express concern about the viability of the downtown club. While supportive of the advantages of the club, both to the alumni as well as to the College, and ready to dedicate financial resources to guarantee its viability, therefore, on June 24, 1996, Father Monan wrote to the outgoing and incoming presidents of the Alumni Association asking that they convene a group to review the contract currently on the table to insure that the members of the current Alumni Board, the representatives of ClubCorp, and the University, in the persons of the Financial Vice-President and Vice-President for University Relations, each be satisfied with the contract, and that this final proposal be submitted to the Alumni Board. However, the final organizational structure to establish and operate the club was not resolved until after Father Monan left his post as University President on July 31, 1996.³⁴

Before any further vote by the Alumni Association on a club contract, the new President, Rev. William P. Leahy, SJ, asked Dr. Frank Campanella, Executive Vice-President, to review the history of the process and recommend how the College should proceed with this initiative. After reviewing the entire matter with the two vice-presidents mentioned above, all three concurred in the belief that the advantages of the club clearly outweighed whatever financial risks it might entail. Dr. Campanella recommended, however, that a specific organizational structure be established for the conduct of the club, in the form of a separate non-profit corporation that would be a wholly-owned subsidiary of the University itself. A Governing Board would be created, including three vice-

presidents of the University, a trustee, the president of the Alumni Association, and an alumni club member. Such an initiative would exempt the Alumni Association from any organizational or financial responsibility for the club, while at the same time assuring advantages to individual alumni and the University of this new presence in downtown Boston.³⁵

On June 10, 1997, at a meeting with Jack Joyce, Jack MacKinnon, and Owne Lynch, together with Peter McKenzie, Financial Vice-President, and Mary Lou Delong, Vice-President for University Relations, Father Leahy acted upon this recommendation, agreeing that a separate corporation would be formed to manage a Boston College Club. He made the decision that the club be a "wholly-owned subsidiary" of the University, which would take responsibility for both membership and debt, that ClubCorp would be responsible for day-to-day operations, and that the Alumni Association would have no official responsibility for financial operations. Fr. Leahy stipulated that the name of the club would be "The Boston College Club" - not the Eagles Club, or any other such name. Father Leahy also invited eighteen graduates of the University to serve as a Board of Governors to advise regarding ongoing operations under the initial chairmanship of Attorney John J. Curtin, Jr., ('54).³⁶ The Boston College Club opened on February 7, 1998, with some 1,200 jubilant BC alumni enjoying a gala opening, supported by BankBoston, ClubCorp, and members of the BC Club, in the lobby of the BankBoston building on 100 Federal Street.

With 1,401 registered members, and an eager waiting list, the new Boston College Club in the Fleet Building at 100 Federal Street, in the heart of the city's



Boston College Club Chairman, John J. Curtin ('54, JD '67) holds a check for \$68,000, contributed by the club to Boston College, while BC Club co-founders Owen Lynch ('56), center, and John E. Joyce ('61), right, look on. The event on March 28, 2002, celebrated the final payment of the BC Club's mortgage, and also saw the club receive the ClubCorp Silver Level Circle of Excellence Award for its achievements in 2001.

financial district, became an instant success - what Jack Joyce called a "grand slam!" The enthusiastic interest and support of BC graduates in downtown accounting firms, banks, law firms, brokerage houses, and investment companies have made the Club on the 36th floor one of the places to get things done - either at a power breakfast, a friendly lunch, or an elegant dinner. Visitors are visibly impressed by the elegance of the decor, the efficiency of the service, and the spectacular views of the Boston skyline that can be seen through the glass windows that surround the Club on three sides. To the west, from the Triple Eagle Room, one can view the Prudential Building, Fenway Park and, on a clear day, the towers on the Heights at Chestnut Hill. To the north, there is the Bunker Hill monument and Charlestown. To the east, from the Harbor Room, visitors get a clear view of State Street, Boston Harbor, and the Atlantic Ocean.

The resources of the Boston College Club work to the advantage of the university as well as to the interests of its alumni. Its professional dining facilities provide frequent opportunities for family gatherings, wedding receptions, academic gatherings, administrative interviews, professional conferences, and alumni meetings. On the Tuesday before Thanksgiving Day, for example, the Club hosted a thank-you dinner for members of the Jesuit communities from BC High, BC, and the Campion Center at Weston. Recently members of the Order of Malta dined at the downtown Club while attending their fourth annual conference at Boston College. Early in 2001, the BC Club presented a check for \$20,000, establishing at the University a scholarship fund for Boston's inner-city students. The following year, on March 28, 2002, the Boston College Club presented the University with a check for \$68,000 at an event that celebrates the final payment of the Club's mortgage, and also saw the Club receive from ClubCorps its Silver Level Circle of Excellence Award. These contributions represent BC's first revenues from a profit-sharing agreement between the University and the club's management firm, Club Corporation of America. "We didn't expect this to take place for about ten years," remarked club co-founder Jack Joyce with an air of obvious pride and satisfaction.³⁷

The Boston College Club is one more evidence of the many ways in which Boston College has continued to maintain its traditional connections with the city, and retain its traditional reputation as "Boston's college." In 1863, at the height of the Civil War, Bishop Fitzpatrick was successful in creating his "college in the city," and although that college later moved to a more spacious location in suburban Chestnut Hill, it has remained faithful to its original mission of providing a Catholic and Jesuit education to young people of all levels of society.

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- ¹⁴ *Boston Herald*, February 15, 1908.
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³² Aloisi et al., Interviews, April 10, 2001. BC Archives.

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BOSTON COLLEGE CLUB

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